Numb. 72

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

Quicquid agunt Homines noſtri Farrago Libelli.

From *Thurſday September* 22. to *Saturday September* 24. 1709.

White's Chocolate-houſe, September 23.

I Have taken upon me no very eaſy Task in turning all my Thoughts on Panegyrick, when moſt of the Advices I receive tend to the quite contrary Purpoſe; and I have few Notices but ſuch as Regard Follies and Vices. But the propereſt Way for me to treat, is, to keep in general upon the Paſſions and Affections of Men, with as little Regard to Particulars as the Nature of the Thing will admit. However, I think there is ſomething ſo paſſionate in the Circumſtances of the Lovers mentioned in the following Letter, that I am willing to go out of my Way to obey what is commanded in it.

SIR, London, September 17.

'YOur Deſign of entertaining the Town with the Characters of the ancient Heroes, as Perſons ſhall ſend an Account to Mr. *Morphew's*, encourages me and others to beg of you, that in the mean Time (if it is not contrary to the Method you have propoſed) you would give us one Paper upon the Subject of *Pætus* and his Wife's Death, when *Nero* ſent him an Order to kill himſelf: His Wife ſetting him the Example, dy'd with theſe Words, *Pætus*, it is not painful. You muſt know the Story, and your Obſervations upon it will oblige,

SIR,

Your moſt humble Servant.

When the worſt Man that ever liv'd in the World had the higheſt Station in it, Human Life was the Object of his Diverſion; and he ſent Orders frequently, out of meer Wantonneſs, to take off ſuch and ſuch, without ſo much as being angry with 'em. Nay frequently his Tyranny was ſo humorous, that he put Men to Death becauſe he could not but approve of 'em. It came one Day to his Ear, that a certain married Couple, *Pætus* and *Arria*, liv'd in a more happy Tranquility and mutual Love than any other Perſons who were then in Being. He liſtned with great Attention to the Account of their Manner of ſpending their Time together, of the conſtant Pleaſure they were to each other in all their Words and Actions; and found by exact Information, that they were ſo treaſonable, as to be much more happy than his Imperial Majeſty himſelf. Upon which he writ *Pætus* the following Billet:

Pætus, you are hereby required to diſpatch your ſelf. I have heard a very good Character of you; and therefore leave it to your ſelf, whether you will die by Dagger, Sword, or Poiſon. If you outlive this Order above an Hour, I have given Directions to put you to Death by Torture.

NERO.

This familiar Epiſtle was deliver'd to his Wife *Arria*, who open'd it.

One muſt have a Soul very well turn'd for Love, Pity, and Indignation, to comprehend the Tumult this unhappy Lady was thrown into upon this Occaſion. The Paſſion of Love is no more to be underſtood by ſome Tempers, than a Problem in a Science by an ignorant Man: But he that knows what Affection is, will have, upon conſidering the Condition of *Arria*, Ten thouſand Thoughts flow in upon him, which the Tongue was not form'd to expreſs. But the charming Statue is now before my Eyes, and *Arria*, in her unutterable Sorrow, has more Beauty than ever appear'd in Youth, in Mirth, or in Triumph. Theſe are the great and noble Incidents which ſpeak the Dignity of our Nature, in our Sufferings and Diſtreſſes. Behold her tender Affection for her Husband, ſinks her Features into a Countenance, which appears more helpleſs than that of an Infant: But again, her Indignation ſhows in her Viſage and her Boſom a Reſentment as ſtrong as that of the braveſt Man. Long ſhe ſtood in this Agony of alternate Rage and Love; but at laſt compos'd her ſelf for her Diſſolution, rather than ſurvive her belov'd *Pætus*. When he came into her Preſence, he found her with the Tyrant's Letter in one Hand, and a Dagger in the other. Upon his Approach to her, ſhe gave him the Order; and at the ſame Time, ſtabbing her ſelf, *Pætus* (ſaid ſhe) it is not painful, and expir'd. *Pætus* immediately follow'd her Example. The Paſſion of theſe memorable Lovers was ſuch, that it illuded the Rigour of their Fortune, and baffled the Force of a Blow, which neither felt, becauſe each receiv'd it for the Sake of the other. The Woman's Part in this Story is by much the more Heroick, and has occaſion'd one of the beſt Epigrams tranſmitted to us from Antiquity.

When Arria *pull'd the Dagger from her Side,*
Thus to her Conſort ſpoke the illuſtrious Bride:
The Wound I gave my ſelf I do not grieve,
I die by that which Pætus *muſt receive.*

From my own Apartment, September 23.

The Boy ſays, one in a black Hat left the following Letter:

Friend, 19th of the 7th Month.

'BEing of that Part of Chriſtians whom Men call *Quakers*; and being a Seeker of the Right Way, I was perſwaded Yeſterday to hear one of your moſt noted Teachers. The Matter he treated, was the Neceſſity of Well-living, grounded upon a future State. I was attentive; but the Man did not appear in earneſt. He read his Diſcourſe (notwithſtanding thy Rebukes) ſo heavily, and with ſo little Air of being convinc'd himſelf, that I thought he would have ſlept, as I obſerv'd many of his Hearers did. I came Home unedi-

fy'd

'fy'd, and troubled in Mind. I dip'd into the 'Lamentations, and from thence turning to the '34th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, I found these Words; '*Wo be to the Shepherds of* Israel, *that do feed them-'selves! Should not the Shepherds feed the Flock? Ye 'eat the Fat, and ye cloath you with the Wool: Ye kill 'them that are fed; but ye feed not the Flock. The 'Diseas'd have ye not strengthen'd; neither have ye 'heal'd that which was sick, neither have ye bound up 'that which was broken; neither have ye brought again 'that which was driven away; neither have ye sought 'that which was lost; but with Force and with Cruelty 'have ye rul'd them,* &c. Now I pray thee, Friend, 'as thou art a Man skill'd in many Things, tell 'me, Who is meant by the *Diseas'd*, the *Sick*, the '*Broken*, the *Driven away*, and the *Lost*? And whe-'ther the Prophecy in this Chapter be accomplish'd, 'or yet to come to pass; and thou wilt oblige thy 'Friend, tho' unknown.

This Matter is too sacred for this Paper; but I can't see what Injury it would do any Clergyman, to have it in his Eye, and believe, all that are taken from him by his Want of Industry, are to be demanded of him. I dare say *Favonius* has very few of these Losses. *Favonius*, in the midst of a Thousand impertinent Assailants of the Divine Truths, is an undisturb'd Defender of 'em. He protects all under his Care, by the Clearness of his Understanding, and the Example of his Life: He visits dying Men with the Air of a Man who hop'd for his own Dissolution, and enforces in others a Contempt of this Life, by his own Expectation of the next. His Voice and Behaviour are the lively Images of a compos'd and well-govern'd Zeal. None can leave him for the frivolous Jargon utter'd by the ordinary Teachers among Dissenters, but such who cannot distinguish Vociferation from Eloquence, and Argument from Railing. He is so great a Judge of Mankind, and touches our Passions with so superior a Command, that he who deserts his Congregation, must be a Stranger to the Dictates of Nature, as well as to those of Grace.

But I must proceed to other Matters, and resolve the Questions of other Enquirers; as in the following:

SIR, *Hedington, Sept.* 19.

'UPon reading that Part of the *Tatler*, Number 69. where Mention is made of a cer-'tain Chappel-Clerk, there arose a Dispute, and 'that produc'd a Wager, Whether by the Words 'Chappel-Clerk, was meant a Clergyman or a Lay-'man? By a Clergyman, I mean one in holy Or-'ders. It was not that any body in the Compa-'ny pretended to guess who the Person was; but 'some asserted, that by Mr. *Bickerstaff*'s Words, must 'be meant a Clergyman only: Others said, that 'those Words might have been said of any Clerk 'of a Parish; and some of 'em more properly, of a 'Layman. The Wager is half a Dozen Bottles of 'Wine; in which (if you please to determine it) 'your Health, and all the Family of the *Staffs*, 'shall certainly be drank; and you will singularly 'oblige another very considerable Family. I mean 'that of,

Your Humble Servants,

The Trencher-Caps.

It is very customary with us learned Men to find Perplexities where no one else can see any. The honest Gentlemen who writ me this, are much at a Loss to understand what I thought very plain; and in Return, their Epistle is so plain, that I can't understand it. This, perhaps, is at first a little like Nonsence; but I desire all Persons to examine these Writings with an Eye to my being far gone in the Occult Sciences; and remember, that it is the Privilege of the Learned and the Great to be understood when they please: For as a Man of much Business may be allow'd to leave Company when he pleases; so one of High Learning may be above your Capacity when he thinks fit. But without further Speeches or Fooling, I must inform my Friends the *Trencher-Caps* in plain Words, that I meant in the Place they speak of, a drunken Clerk of a Church: And I will return their Civility among my Relations, and drink their Healths as they do ours.

Friday *Evening*. *Mr.* Bickerstaff *just now receiv'd Mr.* Trusty's *Letter*.

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